

EDINA PARK BOARD  
7:30 P.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
DECEMBER 8, 1998

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Jean Rydell, Becky Bennett, Andrew Montgomery, Beth Hall, Andy Herring, Tom White, Dave Fredlund, Bill Jenkins, John Dovolis, Dave Crowther

MEMBERS ABSENT: Phyllis Kohler

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Janet Canton

OTHERS PRESENT: Eric Flowers, Marjorie Ruedy, Jane & Charles Paulus, Kathryn & Keith Peterson, Sara Peterson, David & Pam O'Halloran, Barbara Mahler, Gordon Asselstine, Peggy Jennings, Marcia Rehnberg, Caryl Sharp, Ron Sharp, Dave & Alyce Lees, William Loomis

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**I. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 1998 PARK BOARD MINUTES**

Jean Rydell MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 10, 1998 PARK BOARD MINUTES. John Dovolis SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

**II. WOODDALE PARK COMFORT STATION**

Mr. Keprios gave a presentation on the Wooddale Park Comfort Station which explained everything that has taken place to date. Mr. Crowther informed the residents that the Park Board has received a copy of every letter that has been written regarding the Wooddale Park Comfort Station.

A resident handed out to the Park Board 17 additional letters opposing the building of a comfort station at Wooddale Park. She indicated that she feels it's ridiculous to even think about putting a permanent structure at the park. The resident stated that her main concern with the park is the playground equipment because there are some broken items and it is very dangerous. She then handed out pictures showing what the playground equipment looks like. The resident indicated that she feels the \$75,000 could possibly be used to update the playground equipment and make it safe for the children. She noted that she realizes Wooddale Park's playground equipment is not scheduled to redone until 2001 but feels it should be done sooner than that. She then added that there is a permanent restroom facility right across the street at Utley Park.

Gordon Asselstine, resident, indicated that he attended the previous meeting and commented that there were a few people who were in favor of building a permanent structure. He indicated that some neighbors brought up things they were fearful of that might happen. Mr. Asselstine asked what negative experiences has Edina had at the other various facilities. He also noted that \$25,000 has already been spent and therefore it's really only another \$50,000 that is being looked at. Mr. Asselstine also pointed out that people are concerned about safety and noted that the facility would only be open during certain hours.

Mr. Keprios responded that at a previous meeting Gerry Drevlow, an Edina Police Officer, attended and he was asked the question is there an abundance of violent crime or is there any serious violent crime that has occurred in the shelter buildings. He stated that the answer is no, however, that does not mean that they haven't had vandalism. He feels, however, that is not a good reason to not build a structure because vandalism will always occur.

Jane Paulus, resident, indicated that in the presentation by staff the reference was made several times that when the referendum first went out this was identified to the residents of Edina and they should have been aware of it. However, she noted that she thinks when most people were voting in favor of the referendum it was the overall package of the referendum and people weren't breaking it down per item and what it meant to their park. Secondly, she commented that apathy grows because people feel this is a well run community and she knows a number people didn't attend the meeting this evening because they feel the city will do what it wants to do. Ms. Paulus stated that she doesn't always know that the number of people that are physically at a meeting make something right or wrong because it usually comes down to a judgment decision by the people who are either appointed or elected to these committees and City Council that becomes important. She stated that she thinks that what we do need to look at is whether we are going to save \$50,000 or \$75,000 because we are looking at maybe four months out of the year, 8 hours a day. When we look at that and we look at the whole budget designated to a park that size that's a huge percentage.

Ms. Paulus noted that she walks through that park three times a day and the maintenance at Wooddale Park is almost zero right now. She indicated that some neighbors went in and cut down brushes and they left them in piles and the piles were there about a month and a half. Therefore, she can't say there are public employees who are constantly there maintaining the park. Ms. Paulus stated that her question is what it's going to be like if we put a permanent facility there and if that's going to be further maintained. She indicated that the cost is so great in what you are asking the families to give up for that particular park and if every facility in Edina has double facilities to it then one would question whether the government was maintaining itself in a fiscally responsible manner in the community. That is what we really have to look at is that there is already a facility there. Ms. Paulus commented that we need to go back to what is the purpose of Wooddale Park and she thinks that right now the city is pushing that purpose too far

because it doesn't have the square footage to compete against what the other parks have. Therefore, by not putting a public facility there we are going to allow Wooddale to go back to what she believes it was intended for. She stated she would really encourage that it be more than just indefinitely to avoid the burden of attending one meeting after another. The policy makers should come up with a more lasting solution and try to work with the community.

Mr. Crowther asked the residents what their feeling is on having a semi-permanent structure to enclose the satellite like that one that was shown in the presentation rather than just have it sit out in the open. A resident commented that she feels having a structure such as that with a little landscaping around it would be perfectly acceptable. She pointed out that she likes the idea staff has to de-emphasize the use of the park because she agrees the park was not built to accommodate all the scheduled events that occur because it really is not that big.

Mr. White stated that he attended the neighborhood meeting and he agrees with staff to de-emphasize the use of the park with scheduled activities because it is such a small park. Secondly, the comment was made that the neighborhood would rather see new playground equipment than build a bathroom and he noted that he doesn't necessarily think it's a trade-off. Mr. White indicated, however, if the current playground equipment is not safe than it should be taken care of as soon as possible and try to move that date up sooner than 2001.

Mr. White indicated that the neighbors felt crime is an issue in which he responded he doesn't necessarily see any difference between a permanent shelter building and a satellite. In fact, the shelter building would be locked in the evenings and a satellite is always open. Therefore, maybe a permanent shelter is safer than a satellite.

Mr. White commented that he does have a problem with people from the neighborhood saying we don't want people coming to Wooddale Park who live outside of the neighborhood. He stated that may be what the park was originally designed for but at this point in time people outside of the neighborhood are advised to use all of the parks.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that they can try to look at some creative ways to keep the satellite from being vandalized.

Mr. Herring asked about scheduling games at other locations and questioned if the situation at Wooddale Park is really unique compared to the other parks where games are scheduled. Mr. Keprios responded that in his opinion Wooddale Park is unique as far as a safety issue. It's a convenient place to schedule games because of the parking, but we have learned through experience that the park in reality is not big enough to handle that many people. It is not a safe scenario to have children crossing 50th Street.

Ms. Bennett asked if a satellite is put in where would it physically be located. Mr. Keprios replied that he would like to work with the neighbors to figure out where the best location would be for it.

Mr. Dovolis MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION TO PUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PERMANENT COMFORT STATION ON HOLD INDEFINITELY AND RELY ON THE USE OF A SATELLITE DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS AND HAVE MR. KEPRIOS WORK WITH NEIGHBORHOOD TO SETTLE ON SOME SORT OF A PERMANENT THREE SIDED STRUCTURE IF THAT'S WHAT THE NEIGHBORHOOD WANTS. SECONDLY, PLACE SIGNS INFORMING PARK USERS THAT UTLEY IS AVAILABLE WITH PERMANENT RESTROOMS. LASTLY, WORK TOWARDS ELIMINATING SCHEDULED GAMES WHERE POSSIBLE AT WOODDALE PARK. Jean Rydell SECONDED THE MOTION

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

### **III. YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION BUDGETS**

Ms. Bennett indicated that at the Park Board meeting two months ago the topic came up regarding the funds that some of the associations have sitting in CD's, savings and checking accounts. She stated that she is not here to point fingers at anyone for doing anything inappropriate, she just has some questions and concerns. She asked how the association's fees fall in line with what they are being charged, what they get for that money and is there any excess money from those fees that are going into some sort of savings account or CD. She asked if those moneys are then being used to make capital expenditures back to the city as gifts such as what the Basketball Association did. Ms. Bennett commented that her concern is for the families who pay those fees for their children to participate in the sports, are they being overcharged. Also, where is the money coming from for these big capital expenditures and gifts to the city. If it is money raised from fees and is it really the association's function as non-profit associations to be doing that.

Mr. Keprios indicated that each association is run a little bit differently. He then gave an example of the Baseball Association. He noted that baseball raises quite a bit of money by operating the concessions stand at Courtney Fields in Braemar Park. With their profits, the EBA makes capital improvements to Braemar Park. He stated that they try not to overcharge for their program. Mr. Keprios then explained that the Basketball Association currently does not have a vehicle to raise money to make capital improvements to improve their program and therefore, they do it through program fees.

Mr. Keprios explained that all of the athletic associations are independently incorporated with the State of Minnesota and they must file a tax return every year with the IRS if their income is at a certain level. When the IRS looks at these non-profit incorporated groups' returns and believe that the organization has a little too much cash on hand, they are

going to start asking them questions. What their bottom line shows is what their profit and loss statements and expense report show is that those funds are going to improve their sport and as far as the state and IRS are concerned that's okay. However, is that philosophically okay with the city is a question for the Park Board and City Council.

Mr. Keprios pointed out as an example that for 1999 the Park Department has no capital plan, there is not enough money because of levy limits and if history repeats itself there will not be enough funding to keep up with the capital improvements that each sport would like to see. Therefore, these associations have recognized that if they want these improvements they are going to have to raise it on their own.

Mr. Keprios noted that staff will soon be presenting the Park Board with a proposed five year capital plan, which right now identifies approximately 15 million dollars worth of improvements. Aside from the larger items such as the senior center and gymnasiums staff is suggesting that there are approximately \$500,000 worth of capital improvements needed for 1999, knowing full well that there is no money. He commented that staff is looking at a long range plan that includes trying to find creative ways to come up with funding.

Mr. Crowther asked Ms. Bennett if her main concern is that people are not being told what all of their money is going towards that they are being charged as opposed to the philosophical issue of an association paying to improve the fields. Ms. Bennett replied that she feels people need to know if a certain percentage of the fees they are paying are going towards improving the sport when their child is no longer even playing that sport. Mr. Crowther pointed out that all of the athletic associations are independently incorporated and are not part of the city. The City grants them use of their facilities but they don't own or operate them. Mr. Herring added that the City provides them preferred use of the facility.

Ms. Dovolis pointed out that the number of kids who participate in each sport fluctuates from year to year and therefore it's hard to know how many kids will be participating each year.

Ms. Bennett indicated that she has had families tell her that their kids cannot participate in hockey, for example, because they cannot afford it, it costs too much. Mr. Crowther pointed out that all of the associations offer scholarships so there is a mechanism offered for everyone to be able to participate.

Ms. Bennett asked Mr. Keprios if he feels all the fees across the board are in line with what is being charged for each child to play that season. Mr. Keprios responded that it depends on how you view the whole picture of funding and the philosophy of those who play pay. For example, the golfer in all essence pays for his or her own capital improvements at the golf course every time they play a round also the hockey player does every time they rent an hour of ice. Mr. Keprios commented that all of the enterprise facilities follow that philosophy. He then pointed out that basketball does not pay for

their gym time and the only vehicle for them to improve their capital plan is through their registrations. The golfers do it through their fees and charges.

Mr. Keprios indicated that we could approach this in a different way if we feel that we want to raise capital funding on our own and not leave that up to the responsibility of the associations who don't have a vehicle to raise funds. He explained that we could start charging them for the use of facilities and collect it as part of the capital plan. Mr. Keprios stated that he intends to get all of the athletic association presidents together for a group meeting and this is one issue that he does plan to bring up. Also, he will ask the associations if they are being up front and honest with their participants that a portion of their registration fee goes to capital improvements down the road. Mr. Keprios indicated that maybe they should separate that out and give them an option and throw that out for at least discussion if there is some concern.

Mr. Montgomery indicated that a lot of the associations have contributed back to the city but others have not. He noted for example EGAA has not contributed and they have \$53,000 in the bank. Mr. Keprios responded that philosophically he has always questioned whether EGAA should be taking registration dollars and giving it away in scholarships for former participants to go to college. Apparently there is a vehicle for them to do that through the IRS and it is legitimate. Philosophically, however, he has a problem with that. Mr. Keprios indicated that a rule of thumb we have learned that non-profit organizations should always maintain approximately 15% of their annual operating budget in reserve.

Mr. Dovolis commented that Mr. Keprios brought up a good point in that all of the associations presidents get together and discuss these issues. Ms. Bennett noted that she thinks it's wonderful that the associations give back to the city, she just questions does everyone know what their money is being used for and feels that all of the associations should be on the same page. Mr. Crowther indicated that he agrees there should be a commonality for what every association does from an operating standpoint.

Mr. Crowther asked that this issue be looked at again in the future for the Park Board to discuss after the associations presidents have had their meeting.

#### **IV. OTHER**

A. Off-Leash Area - Mr. Montgomery asked whatever happened with the off-leash issue at Todd Park. He noted that he heard someone was supposed to contact him and he has heard nothing. Mr. Keprios indicated that he will follow-up with that.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

John Dovolis MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:40 P.M. Bill Jenkins SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.